

VZCZCXRO4091
OO RUEHDE RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHNR #2702/01 3371624
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 021624Z DEC 08
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7789
INFO RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEPVAA/COMJSOC FT BRAGG NC IMMEDIATE
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE
RHMFIUU/CJTF HOA IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 7415

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 002702

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/E AND A/S FRAZER

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [SO](#) [ET](#)
SUBJECT: SOMALIA - PRESIDENT YUSUF CRITICIZES UNITY
GOVERNMENT PLANS

REF: A. NAIROBI 2681
[1](#)B. NAIROBI 2673

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Transitional Federal Government President Yusuf called Special Envoy Yates on December 1 to condemn the proposals from the November 26 Djibouti meetings (ref A) as "unworkable." He also complained about Ethiopian troops' alleged recent actions at Villa Somalia and stated that Ethiopian withdrawal from Somalia without a replacement force to fill the vacuum would amount to handing Somalia to al-Shabaab. The Special Envoy noted that the November 26 proposals represent a starting point, and encouraged Yusuf to engage in the process rather than exclude himself. On the Villa Somalia complaint, Yusuf seemed to accept S/E Yates' assessment that lower-level officers had probably acted out of turn. Regarding Ethiopian withdrawal, S/E Yates reminded Yusuf of ongoing efforts to establish a force to replace the Ethiopians, and once again encouraged Yusuf to constructively engage in the Djibouti process. End summary.

Parliament of 550 "Unreasonable and Unworkable"

[1](#)2. (SBU) Transitional Federal Government President Abdullahi Yusuf called Special Envoy Yates on December 1 from Puntland, where Yusuf has been since the November 26 peace talks in Djibouti. Yusuf condemned the Djibouti proposal of a 550-member parliament as "unreasonable and unworkable," and an "international coup d'etat" opposed by every Somali "here in Puntland." Yusuf said Somalia is a small country with no money to pay so many MPs, and claimed that expanding the parliament was unconstitutional. He reiterated that he did not believe implementation of Djibouti proposals was possible.

[1](#)3. (SBU) S/E Yates replied that the Djibouti November 26 document was simply a communique from the UN Secretary General's Special Representative (SRSG) spelling out proposals agreed to by the High Level Committee. It established a working group to flesh out the proposals within thirty days. S/E Yates noted that the number of MPs was indeed high and that the Transitional Federal Charter (TFC) would have to be amended before a unity government could be created and installed.

[1](#)4. (SBU) S/E Yates, mindful that Yusuf sees the latest Djibouti proposal as a move toward a Hawiye-only government, said that his conversations with the talks' participants, including with the Government of Djibouti, indicated a commitment to maintain the 4.5 formula for selection of new

MPs. He reminded Yusuf of Yusuf's own statements, to the USG and in public fora, of his support for the Djibouti process and encouraging the President's engagement, rather than estrangement from the process. S/E Yates also pointed out that without continued progress on creating a unity government, and possible extension of the TFC as proposed, that the TFG mandate risked expiring in nine months with nothing accomplished. Finally, S/E Yates noted that during the latest Djibouti meetings the Prime Minister had tried to reach Yusuf in Nairobi to hear his views and seek his support, but that Yusuf had refused to take the calls.

ENDF Entry into Villa Somalia

¶5. (SBU) Yusuf also registered concern over the Ethiopian troops' alleged November 30 entry into Villa Somalia, confiscation of five vehicles mounted with heavy guns and detention of Presidential Guard (PG) officers. Yusuf called the event a "hostile act" and a violation of international law. Yusuf wondered aloud about the USG's relationship with the GOE, but did not overtly imply USG complicity in the event. S/E Yates informed Yusuf that the USG had no prior knowledge of the alleged Ethiopian behavior. Further, S/E Yates noted that the Ethiopian actions had been reversed after a few hours with vehicles returned and the PG officer released. He speculated that the quick reversal suggested that the confiscation had been the product of a decision by lower-level officers and not a directive from Addis. Yusuf seemed to accept that explanation of the events.

NAIROBI 00002702 002 OF 002

Ethiopian Withdrawal

¶6. (SBU) Finally, Yusuf asserted that if Ethiopia unilaterally withdraws as threatened by the end of January, Somalia will effectively be "delivered to al-Shabaab." S/E Yates agreed that no one wanted an al-Shabaab takeover, and relayed to Yusuf some of the information from the recent Joint Security Committee meeting in Naivasha, Kenya (ref B), including the Committee's plans to stand up a joint TFG/ARS contingent, an idea of which Yusuf seemed not to have been aware. S/E Yates once again urged Yusuf's cooperation in the political and security reforms that would contribute to success.

Comment

¶7. (SBU) Yusuf seemed grateful for the opportunity to discuss his concerns with S/E Yates, and seemed somewhat assuaged at the end of their conversation. Embassy is actively monitoring Yusuf's actions and is working directly and indirectly with Yusuf to minimize the any potential ability he may possess to disrupt the Djibouti process.

RANNEBERGER